

Western Kentucky University Special Initiative

Kentucky Academy of Math and Science

What is the Kentucky Academy of Math and Science?

The academy, housed at Western Kentucky University, is a residential, early-admissions program for Kentucky high school students who are high achievers and interested in mathematics and science. Its mission is to allow young people who are gifted in math and science to continue learning at challenging levels and to help meet the Commonwealth's need for leadership in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers.

Why is a program like this needed?

According to *Keeping America Competitive*, a recent report by the Education Commission of the States, "improving mathematics and science education in the United States belongs near the top of the policymaking agenda. America's role as a leader in the world's economy...depends directly on the ability of our education system to produce students who can compete in the math- and science-dominated industries of the future." Studies have shown that students who have not been exposed to rigorous, challenging math and science curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels are less likely to pursue these fields and are often not qualified to pursue careers in the STEM fields.

How will the program work?

The Kentucky Academy will provide two years of academic college coursework at WKU, allowing its students access to both rigorous college courses as well as school activities in the company students of the same age who are their intellectual peers. Students will have opportunities to engage in research with professors in the Program of Distinction in Applied Research and Technology as well as with professors in other departments and programs.

Will academy students live on campus?

Students will enroll after their sophomore year of high school, live in a residence hall on campus designed for academy students, and enroll in undergraduate courses. At the end of the two-year program, academy students will have earned at least 57 college credit hours, as well as have completed high school.

Is this program unique to Kentucky?

Kentucky will be the 14th state to open a residential school in mathematics and science. North Carolina was the first to establish such a program and today has 560 students. None of the residential schools funded by their state legislatures have closed; all continue and some have histories of more than 20 years.



What is the Council's request?

The Council seeks \$500,000 of recurring funds in FY 2006-07 and an additional \$1,500,000 of recurring funds in FY 2007-08 to support the Kentucky Academy of Math and Science.

One Mission: Better Lives for Kentucky's People